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one aspect of their presumed "familiarity with learning," if we may call it that, they gained a reputation as exorcists and curers. Today some among the couple of thousand Kaṇakkas still practise these crafts, although they no longer hold a monopoly among the Badagas. (My chief medical informant, K. Sithamma, was born in a Kaṇakka family in 1891.)

1.6. During the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries the Badaga community increased from a reported three villages in 1603 to nearly 370 villages a century ago. This expansion, marking the second phase, encompassed some developments of importance to the history of Badaga therapy. The community was faced with the problem of adapting to a new geographic and social environment, and clearly succeeded in doing so. We may presume that natural selection helped the population build up a genetic resistance to whatever montane illnesses had not previously affected the people when they were living in Mysore; and that some lowland disease organisms were no longer able to survive at the new elevation, either because it was too high and cold for their animal hosts, or else because the hosts among the scattered and tiny human population died off without transferring these organisms to new hosts, or more probably because when the density of population was very low infection by particular diseases summoned forth antibodies or other disease-resistant aptitudes, which protected their descendants from any further infection by those diseases. As the settlements expanded the increasing numbers of people permitted greater transference of disease organisms and called for greater amounts of health care; but at the same time these settlements, located in most parts of the Nilgiri Massif within a zone that lay between 4000 and 7300 feet of elevation, gave people opportunities to select the more healthy residential sites, to explore the micro-environmental differences in the area, and most importantly to discover medicinal uses for dozens of new species of plants that were in many instances confined to the Massif (see Trilingual Index). We may presume that the pharmacological uses of local plants were discovered by Badaga women who worked as goatherds and men working as cowherds, by closely observing the feeding habits of their animals. Geza Roheim has made a similar observation on the control that Australian Aboriginal women have over the medicinal use of plants which they are responsible for gathering. While it is true that Badagas did not keep

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goats recently, they did so during the seventeenth century and even later (Finicio 1603: 723; Birch 1838:103).

1.7. After contact with the British a new adjustment with their changed environment was achieved by the Badagas, and their population was able to increase rapidly for several decades while there was still a very low density of population. One relevant factor, I would hypothesize, was that a change in their drinking habits followed the arrival of the British (from 1819 onward), and that this was associated with greater resistance to bacteria in the drinking water. The main drinks of the community at the time were fresh milk and stream water: "...at midday, or towards evening, parties of them are often to be seen seated on the bank of some brook or rill, partaking of their simple fare, which generally consists of barley or other meal, mixed up with some of the pure element that is gurgling past them, a little salt, and a little chilly" (Harkness 1832: 111; so also Young 1827: 42, Birch 1838:103, and Dulles 1835: 465-66). Two British officials, one a surgeon, make it clear that until the 1830s the Badagas had no alcohol, and "drunkenness is unknown here" (Macpherson 1820: lix; Ainslie 1834: 36). But the surgeon had already in 1829 recorded that he had "tasted very tolerable specimens of beer which had been brewed on these hills from malt of Native Manufacture" (Price 1908: 218). Within another two decades a staggering change had come about:

> Lord Tweeddale...in 1847,...stated that he had never anywhere seen such widespread and continuous drunkenness amongst low-class natives as prevailed there [the Nilgiri town of Ootacamund], not only in the case of those resident, but also in that of peons, followers, and servants, brought up from Madras and other places. The drink at this time available was...arrack, which ...was not very expensive. (Price 1908: 51)

This drunkenness was more of an urban than a rural phenomenon, although some Badagas did go to the town to indulge themselves. Meanwhile, at the same time that beer and arrack were becoming available, so were tea and coffee. These hot drinks were generally preferred by the Badagas to stream water, because of the cool climate, even though they had a religious tabu against heating milk (Vivekanandam Pillai 1937: 247). In this latter regard, I was told that if one keeps milk in a warm place it will "boil up" of its own accord

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843 pregnancy. Furthermore, a man whose wife is pregnant should not kill a snake, lest the spirit of the snake enter the foetus and the
(825) child be born dumb, looking like a snake, and with its tongue forever flashing in and out.

There are also various restrictions on the woman's behaviour. She should not eat red onion or garden marrows, otherwise the baby will have itches when born. She should keep herself busy around the house, so that the child will also be lively when born. Immediately after a pregnancy is suspected the girl will be prohibited from washing her clothes or putting on clean ones, lest this make her feel so good that she menstruates. She cannot go to any festival or ceremony at which she might see something new or interesting. She must not cross any large river, and must not cross the boundary of her hamlet either. All of these restrictions apply only till the ninetieth day of pregnancy.

During the dangerous period between the fortieth and sixtieth days the woman must have complete rest, and she generally goes to her father's house for this. During that time the pregnancy can
(261) be lost if she eats "heating" foods, those causing an excess of heat in the body. Thus women are not given chilies then, although they want them, because these are heating. Furthermore, a woman should not carry a heavy load, or run, or take long strides, and should be careful while walking down steep places.

(833) A woman should not have intercourse from the time her pregnancy is first recognized until the third month. After that time she can have it, but only at long intervals. Prior to the sixtieth day the woman may abort, in which case the abortion is treated as a menses for social purposes (see above, 3.13.).

4.3. In her third month a woman can become active and eat without the nauseous sensation. Then, when lying in bed early in the morning, she can feel the surface of her stomach and known there is something else there; and generally from the third month she will see some milk if the breasts are pressed. From the start of the fifth month the foetus moves in the womb occasionally. Between the seventh and ninth months the woman can sometimes feel it "gasping for breath."

No special foods or medicines are given the woman from her third month onward, but if she is getting too much "heat" in the body then a particular mixture is fed to her. This is because with excess of "heat" she may have a stillbirth in the seventh or eighth

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539 855 children are the same"—in that they cannot be properly controlled and so should be exempted from the rules of the household. And again: "If the child shits on your thigh, will you cut it right off?" It is recognized that bringing up children is no easy task: "Pacifying the children is no less a job than digesting the raw flesh of an animal" (Verghese 1963: 423).

Infancy

854 5.8. The socialization of the infant may have to begin with the education of the mother. Three or four days after the delivery she starts bathing the baby herself, but if this is her first child she will usually be helped for a couple of weeks by her own mother until she has learnt the correct procedure. No swaddling or tying of the child occurs (Jagor 1876: 199), but it is bundled up in old rags to keep it warm. As a proverb explains, "The child will grow fast with old rags, and the buffalo will grow fast with dung." It is for this reason that a pregnant woman keeps all old cloth. (More usually rags are made into pillows or bedding, or used at menstruation; and woollen rags are kept for bandages.) The child should always be kept in warm cloths, for it is believed that if his temperature is high it can be reduced to normal, but if it is lower than normal he cannot raise it. In the old days when no woollens were available, babies were covered with cotton folded to eight or ten thicknesses for greater warmth. Only used cloth is allowed, which is why the old rags are preserved; but if someone wants to give a baby a new cloth one of the parents should first wear it a little and rub it on the body so that it can be considered used.

5.9. Care is taken to keep a baby's face clean, especially during the [825] first 40 or 50 days, when a cat might otherwise find milk on its face and either suffocate the baby or do it some harm.

[539] [514] It is accepted as natural that the nose often gets dirty: as a proverb puts it, "So long as the nose exists, won't there be mucus oozing from it?" As was mentioned earlier (2.11), the method of cleaning a baby's nose is to suck it and spit the mucus out. (If a woman has been chewing tobacco she washes her mouth out before doing this.) This method is considered more gentle than squeezing the nose; but after a child has reached six months relatives clean it with the index finger and thumb of either hand, or with a body cloth. Between the ages of three and five, depending on when the

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dried further. Finally the patient swallowed the pieces without chewing them first, so that their sharp edges would cut off any parts of the tonsil that remained. The pieces were swallowed before each of the next two meals following the operation. After this the patient just took the ordinary meals, but was advised to wash his mouth out with salty water for one or two days.

757 COUGH (*kemmalu*)
(825)

5.29. The blood of a hare (*Lepus nigricollis*) used to be given as a throat medicine to children suffering from a cough (Thurston 1912: 85). Today the stem of a peacock feather is used instead to cure a cough or cold in young children. It is rubbed on a stone to produce a minute amount of powder, which is then mixed with powdered rhizome of the sweet flag and a little honey, and swallowed by the child. For babies, however, nothing but a half teaspoonful of honey is given, and for children between one and four years this is increased to a full teaspoonful. Only the honey from sealed cells of honeycomb is used as a cough medicine, although Badagas do use the honey from unsealed cells as a foodstuff.

755 SINGULTUS (*selamudalu*)

5.30. Someone should blow in an infant's ear to cure its hiccups. If this is not successful, then one blows on the top of its head.

757 PERTUSSIS (*kokkare*)
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5.31. The flesh of the Nilgiri langur (*Presbytis johnii*) used to be sold in local bazaars as a cure for whooping-cough (Thurston 1906: 271); I have heard that it is still available, although illegally so since the animal became a protected species.

851 RICKETS (*sotte*)
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(826)
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5.32. If a baby is born with its limbs bent nothing can be done about it, although massage will be attempted in infancy, as we mentioned above (5.10). If it is thought there is no strength in the waist "because of the nerves in the hip," a treatment can be tried. Instead of bathing the baby in regular hot water, some water in which rice or preferably little millet, has been cleaned is kept, and each evening for a week or two this is heated for the daily

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would then try to kill it: if they succeed the patient will recover quickly, but if they fail he will become mad too. The actual treatment is the same as for dog-bite.

6.22. It is unlikely that any Badagas have been killed by snake-bite, and the large python (*Python molurus*) is quite rare. A proverb has it that "A cobra won't kill without finding a mistake." This means that if one kicks a cobra (*Naja naja*) unintentionally it will not harm the man because he intended no harm to it. Badagas believe that snakes on the plateau are not as poisonous as those in the plains; they neither kill them nor go near a dead one (Breeks 1873: 104). If bitten by a snake one should immediately tie a tourniquet of some woman's hair, or failing that a thin creeper, around the affected limb or extremity above the swelling. This will help cure it quicker. (The same treatment is used by the Todas; Rivers 1906: 267.)

Sometimes a *mantravadi* (magician) cures snake-bite by touching a special small black stone against the wound, and then tying it there while he says some spells. Although he goes through this magical process only once it will cure the wound. After the stone has been tied to the patient he must not sleep for 24 hours, and must starve totally for the same period. Following a snake-bite water must under no circumstances touch any part of the body, and of course the patient must not walk through a stream or be in the rain.

6.23. If one pulls a bee sting out at once the swelling is small; otherwise its poison goes into the swelling. In a case of multiple stings the person must immediately pour water over the body or jump into a nearby stream. In a bad case the patient will be lethargic and have fever for up to three days; and during that time he must bathe very often in cold water. After each bath any

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thigh, an ulcer on the knee and extensive cellulitis of the calf muscle caused the most excruciating pain at the slightest movement. She had been in this state at home for over a month, quite neglected by the family. . . . We opened the abscesses and gave penicillin in large doses. For over two months she had to be treated. . ." (Ketti Medical Mission 1953: 4-5). 164

6.45. Badaga youths once used to engage in a non-ceremonial procedure designed to strengthen their wrists so that they could manage to milk large numbers of buffalo. A fire was made by rubbing fire-sticks together, during the dry summer months when men were out on the downland grazing their herds. A helper would then take a piece of glowing charcoal and burn one or two lines across the arms just above the back of the wrists. The burns were then left to heal (Thurston 1909: 83). Something similar was done with a branding iron on the front thighs of oxen, with a view to making them strong for ploughing. 826 164 234 825

FRACTURE (*odeda ilu*)

6.46. The Badaga technique for setting bones involves first feeling to discover whether a bone is broken. If it is, the therapist manipulates it until it is in the correct position. She then collects either Jamaican switch sorrel or eucalyptus leaves and ties a thick pad of them at the point of fracture. For a broken arm or leg two or three splints of wood are then tied along the limb, or a bamboo milk container (*aṇḍe*) is split in two for this purpose. The patient rests for three days and nights without moving the limb. After that the therapist removes the splints and leaves, and checks the fracture by manipulation. If it is not yet repaired another pad of leaves is tied on with splints for a further three days. This process may have to be repeated often, for larger bones can take a month to heal. In the case of a fractured rib, cranium or jaw, the leaves are ground up and applied as a thick paste to the fracture. A cloth is then tied over 752

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sad and discouraged, return home in the full conviction that the expenses they have been put to and the pains they have taken have been of no avail. (Dubois 1906 : 594-95)

More recently it has also been reported that sterile women attended the popular festival of the goddess Ma:riamma at Ka:ramaḍai, near the eastern foot of the Nilgiris in Coimbatore District, to have intercourse with religious mendicants there in the hope of getting children. Such unpleasant procedures, resorted to by Badaga, Tamilian and Kanarese pilgrims alike, have long since ceased to occur, but childless couples still make vows at the Ka:ramaḍai festival "Miles" : (1933 267).

URETHRITIS (*sege*)

6.65. A liquid medicine (details unrecorded) otherwise given to newly delivered mothers (cf. 4.11) is administered to a person who cannot urinate. This condition and the associated swollen bladder, caused by excess of "heat" in the body, are relieved by the medicine.

Fevers

FEVER (*jara*)

6.66. The Badagas like the English have a saying, "If you are suffering from a cold, take extra food; if suffering from a fever, take little food." There are different kinds of fever, and they can affect people of all ages, but one medicine can be taken for all kinds. The shoots and smaller leaves of the velvety patchouli and related species (*koḍaṅgu*) are ground up and the juice from them mixed with some salt. This is swallowed, and is said to be more effective than quinine. In the early nineteenth century opium was used as a prophylactic against fever (Price 1908: 224).

6.67. The Kurumbas knew of a now-forgotten twig or root which, when smelled fresh, dispelled fever. The present medicine of the Badagas makes use instead of the nest of the red-headed fantail warbler

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Cisticola exilis erythrocephala), which incorporates parts of that same plant. Therapists who collect the nests only take disused ones, which they find in jungle bushes. For the medicine one large nest is pounded up and burnt in the pounding-hole (cf. 6.58). The patient sits next to this hole, his body covered with a blanket, and inhales the fumes from the burning nest. The treatment is followed for three consecutive mornings, before the patient goes to bathe or do anything else. It is only used for a slight fever which has lasted for some days or weeks.

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6.68. The treatment for a fever caused by fright involves a sweat bath. A steel knife is made red hot, put on a plate, the patient's head held over it, and then both plate and patient are covered with a blanket. Once this is done cold water is poured over the knife, and the patient remains bathing in the steam under the blanket for five minutes. After this he drinks the water from the plate (together with any dirt in it, for it has come directly from the stream).

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SINUS INFECTION (*negaḍi*)

6.69. When a person is tired much of the time, feels thirsty, has heartburn and reddish eyes, these are signs that the body is "overheated." Conversely if the nose and throat seem blocked, the head feels dizzy and the patient lacks energy, then there is "cold" in the body. Rheumatism can be caused by an excess of either heat or cold in the body. If caused by heat it is easily cured by "cooling" the body ; but if by cold it may be difficult to get the body "heated" sufficiently. A bad case of pneumonia is called by the general term *na:du no:* ("country disease"), while a mild case is *gu:de no:*; but either way it is caused by "cold," is a contagious disease transmitted by the breath, and is treated as an ordinary fever. Typhoid is treated as a more severe fever.

RHEUMATISM (*baibu*)

[757]

PNEUMONIA

TYPHOID (*na:ḍu noi*)

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The treatment for fever is partly an appropriate adjustment of the patient's diet, and partly an oint-

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761 789 sees who has shouted the news, some of his closer friends and relatives from that hamlet will immediately leave for his house, to pay respect to his corpse. A woman can resort to the same subterfuge only if she can find a man to make the dreadful pronouncement on her behalf. The process of misleading the mourning friends is supposed to prolong a person's life: it may also be done by relatives for an influential man who is indeed sick, but who they hope will be enabled to live longer by this process of cheating death. 763 This concern contrasts with the cynical treatment sometimes offered to dying people in the last century: "When a rich Badaga is very ill and the agony approaches all the relatives come and gather near him and see to it that he is well provided for his journey into the realm of the dead. For this end they make the dying man swallow two small gold pieces with butter... If the ill man does not die very soon and the relatives think he lasts too long they give him [761] opium in order to hasten his hour of death." (Mörike 1849: 102).

763 As mentioned above, the sight of two crows in congress is an omen of impending death. Other birds give similar information. If the forest eagle-owl (*Huhua nipalensis*) calls ³gu ::₁ there will cer- ●825 tainly be a death soon in the hamlet where it was heard: if it is already past the new moon, death will come before the full moon. Thus if anyone is sick in the hamlet closest to where this bird is heard, people know he will die; and if no one is sick, women nearing their delivery take special care. (Other kinds of cries made by the same bird indicate whether or not rain is coming.)

761 539 Nothing is more certain than death. As various Badaga proverbs put it: "If you live to six years you will die; if you live to a hundred years you will die"; "Even though you can escape at any time you cannot escape the time of death;" "You have paid up his padded account after seeing it; there is no sorrow when a man dies in old age"; "Even if all the [Nilgiri] divisions leave you, the burial ground won't leave you alone"; and again, "Even if one lives a thousand years, death won't pass him by."

763 9.5. When an old person becomes sick and seems likely to die, he is given a separate bed even if he did not previously have one, and is treated with circumspection. Messages about his true condi- 763 tion are sent to a number of other Badaga hamlets where the dying 574 man has relatives, inviting those people to visit him. Unless the dying person is more than 40 such visitors are not invited, because [203] a much greater chance of recovery is presumed, while a large party